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## NJMC to Develop Bergen County FEMA Plan

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission Board of Commissioners today authorized the agency to apply for a \$1 million federal grant to prepare a Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Plan for Bergen County. The plan would constitute the NJMC's first major effort to aid the greater Hackensack River watershed.

"Over the past four years the NJMC has put together a highly respected team of professionals that have set the Meadowlands District on a course of pioneering regional planning and coordination," said NJMC Chairman and New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Acting Commissioner Charles A. Richman. "Now we will extend the power of these skills to serve the majority of the Hackensack River watershed to ensure residents in the District are better protected from natural disasters that do not respect borders or jurisdictions."

The grant application will be prepared immediately and, if accepted by FEMA, would allow Bergen County to receive federal funding for flood control and other hazard mitigation infrastructure.

"As we have learned in recent years, high quality regional cooperation is a necessity when disaster strikes and the more we are able to act in a multi-jurisdictional manner, the better we can serve residents' needs," said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio. "Particularly when it comes to flooding, we have learned that when we help our neighbors, we help ourselves."

Today's action by the board also allows the NJMC's executive director to enter into an agreement with Bergen County, at whose request the plan will be undertaken. NJMC emergency management experts will focus on flooding, increasing the survivability of existing and future structures – including buildings needed for disaster management – and regional coordination for a broad range of natural disasters.

The action would follow the NJMC Board's approval of the first-ever Floodplain Management Plan for the Meadowlands under FEMA guidelines and resulting solutions, plus NJMC assistance during recent flooding in Oakland, which lies outside the 14-municipality Meadowlands District.

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